

The Workplace Old vs New



This is the most unique time in American history—a time when four distinct generations are converging upon the workplace—every organization must be prepared to deal with the differences.

Below are some characteristics that identify the traditional workplace elements and the new, emerging traits in the workplace.




Elements of the Old Workplace	Elements of the New Workplace
Structured	Flexible
Stable, secure	Changing; little security
Employer will take care of employees	Employees responsible for themselves
Pay linked to position	Pay linked to productivity
Financial incentives	Variety of incentives
Continual employment	Frequent periods of unemployment
Linear career	Non-linear career
Work for others	Self employment
Local or national economy	International, global economy
White male influence	Multi-ethnic, female influence
Job specific, clear delineation of duties	Many duties, cross training common
Large employers	Small employers/units
Labor intensive	Knowledge intensive
Worker as instrument	Worker as human resource
Hierarchical	Participatory
Education is completed	Life-long learning
Education & work considered separate activities	Education & work commingled
Focus on product	Focus on customer service
Error, slippage tolerated, even expected	Total quality management/control

The Generational Puzzle at Work

Members of a generation are linked through the shared life experiences of their formative years. Experiences such as: pop culture, economic conditions, world events, natural disasters, heroes, villains, politics and technology create bonds tying the members of a generation together into what social scientists call “cohorts.” Because of these shared experiences, cohorts develop and retain similar values and life skills as they learn what to hold dear and how to go about doing things.

Who Are They?



Defining the Generations			
Traditionalists 1922-1945 61-84 years old	Baby Boomers 1946-1964 42-60 years old	Gen Xers 1965-1980 26-41 years old	Millennials 25 years old and younger
AKA: Seniors, G.I., Matures, WWII Generation, Veterans, Silent Generation	AKA: Boomers	AKA: Thirteeners, Baby Busters, Post Boomers, Twentysomethings, MTV Generation	AKA: Generation Y, Nintendo Generation, Generation 2001, the Ne(X)t or Net Generation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardworking • Economically conscientious • Trusting of the government • Grew up being very optimistic about the future • Hold a strong set of moral obligations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grew up during a time of economic prosperity against a backdrop of rebellion • Enter the workforce optimistic and driven • Work relentlessly in the pursuit of goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discouraged and disheartened • Technologically adept, clever and resourceful • Comfortable with change and are clear about the meaning of balance in their lives • Work to live, not live to work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimistic about the future and realistic about the present • Have an easy attitude toward gender stereotyping • Resilient and believe that hard work and goal setting are sure tickets to success. • Relate best to the Senior generation

Different Characteristics of Different Generations

For the future, adaptability will be the key to success. The concept of diversity works to shape the future of business more than any other because it is about an environment fueled by opportunity for everyone. The economic forces shaping the future will demand that diverse groups not only be accepted, but that they be a prerequisite in the workplace. The key to harnessing the powerful potential of tomorrow's diverse workplace involves more than just adapting to change. Learning to manage change, to drive change, that's the quality which puts companies on the leading edge, and moves them beyond mere survival.



We need to ask ourselves:

- Where do our employees tend to come from and where can we get more?
- How can we attract them?
- What kind of experience and environment are they looking for?
- Once we've got them here, how can we keep them coming back?
- What kind of perks can we offer that will have them stick around with us?
- How can we reward the most loyal of them?

Core Values			
Traditionalists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedication/sacrifice • Hard work • Conformity • Law and Order • Respect for authority • Delayed reward • Duty before pleasure • Adherence to rules 	Baby Boomers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism • Team Oriented • Personal gratification • Health and wellness • Personal growth • Youth • Work • Involvement 	Gen Xers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Thinking globally • Balance • Technoliteracy • Fun • Informality • Self-reliance • Pragmatism 	Millennials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimism • Civic duty • Confidence • Achievement • Sociability • Morality • Street smarts • Diversity

“Generational differences can be a source of creative strength and a source of opportunity, or a source of stifling stress and unrelenting conflict.”

How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work

How to Get Along

Connecting Generations: Claire Raines

Communication Do's & Don'ts

DON'TS

with

Traditionalists

- Profanity
- Slang
- Emotional language
- Disorganization
- Lack of respect for tradition
- Poor grammar
- Disrespect for experience

DO: Treat these colleagues with respect. Show that you're organized, emphasize long-term goals and the history of the concept, and use your best grammar.

DON'TS

with

Baby Boomers

- Brusqueness
- Unfriendliness
- Not showing interest in them
- Show of power, one-up-man-ship
- Political incorrectness

DO: Take plenty of time to establish rapport. Tie your concept to development opportunities and the mission and values of the organization as well as the individual. Recognition is especially important to Boomers.

DON'TS

with

Gen Xers

- Schmoozing
- Inefficient use of time
- Flashiness
- Hyperbole, acronyms, corporate speak
- Incompetence
- Bureaucracy
- Complex policies

DO: Show respect for their time by approaching them efficiently. Be straightforward in your approach, leading with the bottom line. Use results-based language.

DON'TS

with

Millennials

- Cynicism
- Sarcasm
- Unfairness
- Condensation

DO: Use a collaborative approach, including peers in the meeting when possible. Be positive. Show respect for their achievements, and use technologically impressive presentations when available.

Keys to Motivating

Traditionalists

- Use the personal touch, hand write a note
- Consider plaques and more traditional rewards
- Acknowledge the person's background and experience

Baby Boomers

- Give them lots of public recognition
- Give them perks
- Get consensus
- Reward their work ethic and long hours

Gen Xers

- Give them lots of projects, allowing them to prioritize them in their own way
- Provide constructive feedback
- Give them time to pursue other interests, even have fun at work
- Provide them with leading-edge technology

Millennials

- Establish mentoring programs
- Provide lots of training—new opportunities for learning
- Ask for and respect their input